

# The Midwife.

## THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

### PENAL BOARD.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Wednesday, January 20th, at 11.30 a.m., for the purpose of hearing the charges alleged against eight certified midwives with the following result.

*Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.*—Maria Booth (No. 3263), Mary Cox (No. 19286), Eliza Elston (No. 11964), Nita Fitzpatrick (No. 6046), Sarah Hudson (No. 19345), who had been previously cited, and Emma Weyman (No. 5414.)

*Cautioned.*—Dorcas Maria Hodgson (No. 4585, L.O.S. certificate.)

One case was adjourned, the Local Supervising Authority being asked for a report as to the midwife's cleanliness, and capacity to take a temperature, in three and six months' time.

The charges were, for the most part, of the usual character—negligence and misconduct in failing to wash the patient, to record pulse and temperature, to explain that the case was one in which the attendance of a medical practitioner was required, to attend to the comfort and cleanliness of the patient, want of cleanliness, failure to take the necessary appliances and antiseptics when called to a midwifery case, and to keep a Register of Cases as required by Rule E.23, of using the same appliance for giving vaginal injections as that used for giving enemata.

In one case when the Medical Officer of the Local Supervising Authority who was present, was asked by the Chairman whether any means were taken to instruct the midwives, he stated that formerly inspection was carried out by the Medical Officer of Health, and it was a useless ceremony altogether, but that now a midwife had been appointed as inspector, who endeavoured to teach the less educated midwives.

In the case of Nita Fitzpatrick, the charge was "That on November 14th, 1914, you were convicted at the Assizes held in and for the County of Stafford of aiding and abetting one, Howell, to procure abortion." The offence was at first denied but afterwards admitted, the defence put forward to the Board being that though convicted at the Assizes the midwife was discharged on her own recognizances.

In the case in which no action was taken, but a report asked for from the Local Supervising Authority in three and six months' time, the principal charge was "the patient suffering from ante-partum hæmorrhage, with œdema of the legs and vulva and from a purulent discharge, you did not explain that the case was one in which the attendance of a registered medical practitioner was required." Some five days later

having advised medical aid, and medical aid having been sought for the patient, there was a further charge of having neglected to notify the Local Supervising Authority thereof, as required by Rule E.21 (1).

There were two points of interest about this case to practising midwives: (1) that the case was one of ante-partum illness, and that medical advice having been sought, the midwife did not remain with the patient until medical help arrived and subsequently carry out the doctor's instructions.

This obligation according to the rules appears to be imposed on the midwife during the pregnancy of a patient "if the case be one of emergency." Presumably in this instance the midwife did not consider it was, and, in respect to the further charge of neglecting to notify the Local Supervising Authority the midwife's defence was that medical aid having been summoned, her obligation ceased—the medical man being in charge of the patient. This point was emphasised by Miss Rosalind Paget during the discussion of the case.

The only defended case was that of Miss Dorcas Maria Hodgson, defended by her solicitor, Mr. Barker. The first charge, that of neglecting to explain for three days that the case of a child suffering from inflammation of the eyes was one in which the attendance of a registered medical practitioner was required, was considered by the Board to be technically proved. Five other charges were considered not proved. In the course of the defence it was asserted that pressure was used by the inspector to secure statements from patients who, after having made them desired to retract them. In informing the midwife of the decision of the Board to caution her the chairman told her that she must observe the rules strictly. She had notified the case late, but such cases must be notified promptly. The chairman commented upon the contradictory evidence introduced into the case, in a way that had been unheard of previously.

### THE MONTHLY MEETING.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, January 21st, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

The following letters were received:—

(a) A letter from the Clerk of the Council stating that the Lord President has been pleased to appoint the Lady Mabelle Egerton to be a member of the Board for a further period of three years from the 29th day of January, 1915.

(b) A letter from the Secretary of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses informing the Board that Miss Rosalind Paget has been reappointed to represent the Institute on the Central Midwives Board for a period of three years ensuing March 31st next.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)